

Westminster Chimes

Coming in to be nurtured, going out to serve

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Welcome to Our New Assistant Director of Music for Handbells

Westminster is happy to announce that our new Assistant Director of Music for Handbells will be Martha Wilson, who will begin her new role on August 1st. Westminster spoke with Director of Music Ministries Debbie Glaze about the search:



Martha and Finn

"We were looking for someone who could skillfully and joyfully carry on the bell ministry that Anne [Stevenson] has established. These are some experienced ringers who function as a family, really, so we were seeking someone who was experienced in ringing and ideally, in leading, choosing music, and who would fit into the bell choir culture here at Westminster. In Martha, we found all of those things and more.

Martha has decades of experience in ringing and leading and teaching/training ringers, plus a lifetime of experience with bell literature and ringing techniques. She is a member here, has rung with this choir numerous times, and has a wonderful combination of high expectations, patience, and a pleasant and humorous style that will make the process enjoyable for all.

I'd like to thank the search committee, Leslie Lehmann, Sharon Ross, and Graham Ross, for the hours of time and the care they put into this important decision. Also, the bell ringers were an integral part of this search, and their feedback and commitment to the process was invaluable."

Below is an interview with Martha about the new position:

Many of our community members already know you because you're a WPC member. How/when/why did you first come to Westminster?

After Kris (my wife) resigned from her job as the director of music at Tualatin Presbyterian Church, and honestly a brief respite from the every week commitment, we decided to look for a new church home in 2013. We wanted a congregation that took a public stand on welcoming LGBTQI folk and a church with a rich music program. Debbie Glaze had encouraged us to visit, so it was the first place we went and we never went elsewhere!

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Welcome to Our New Assistant Director of Music for Handbells

What's your bell-ringing background?

I started ringing bells in the late 1980s at Lake Grove Presbyterian Church. Around the year 2000 I joined Bells of the Cascades, one of the premier auditioned bell choirs in the country. I rang with them until last year. In the late 1990s I began my directing career with the bells at Emanuel Presbyterian in West Linn, where I was for three years. I then formed a bell choir at Tualatin Presbyterian, led a fundraising campaign for the purchase of four octaves of handbells, and directed them for 10 years. I am certified as a Level 1 Handbell Conductor from the Handbell Musicians Guild of America.

Why did you want to be the new Assistant Director of Music for Handbells?

Because it's the only group many of you know, you may not know just how skilled they are! This is a really talented group of musicians who embrace being challenged. In addition, they are amazing and delightful people whose company I enjoy! I thought about the fact that my own church had a need, I had the knowledge and ability to meet that need, and the cherry on top was the wonderful group of people I would be spending time with in music making!

As you take the bell choir into the future, what would you like to see them play and/or accomplish?

I've already been in conversation with the group and know they want to be challenged. We'll undoubtedly visit a favorite piece or two from the past, but I look forward to introducing them to some new pieces as well. I'd love to see the group return to concerts, if they want. I also love collaborations, playing with other musicians, whether another bell choir, other instruments, or vocals.

What are you most excited about as you start this new role?

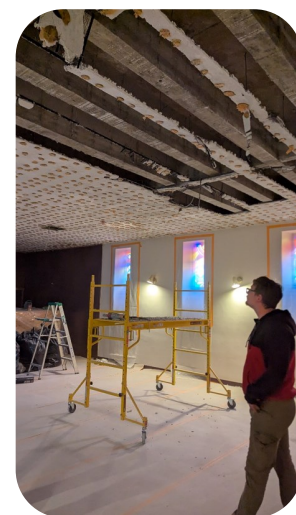
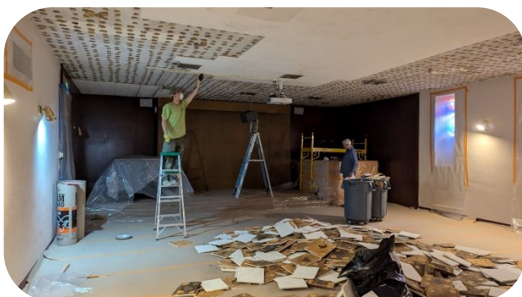
Getting to spend time with these wonderful people and making music together. I'd also love to welcome new members and teach more people in the congregation how to ring handbells!

What do you love about playing the bells?

Handbell ringing is a uniquely interdependent musical experience. Imaging sitting 13 people at a single piano and saying "you play only these notes." You rely on everyone else to play their notes and you only sound good as a whole. These folks know how to be 13 people at one instrument. I've played in orchestras and I've sung in choirs, but there are always other sopranos or other violins who can pick up the part if you're not present or if you miss a note. Not so in handbells. Each person is 100% critical to the whole. It's a beautiful example of our interdependence as the body of Christ.

Chapel Renovations

Renovations on the chapel have been happening during June. Planned work includes a new ceiling and new lighting. Keep your eyes open for a beautiful, refreshed space coming soon!



Pastor's Column

The Rev. Gregg Neel at 503-287-1289, ext. 114

Jeanne Calment of Arles, France, holds the record as the longest-living verified person in history (122 years). She was known for a razor-sharp wit. Here are some of her quotes:

- **When asked on her 120th birthday what kind of future she expected:** "A very short one."
- **On her longevity and worries:** "If you can't change something, don't worry about it."
- **On youth:** "Being young is a state of mind, it doesn't depend on one's body. I'm actually still a young girl, it's just that I haven't looked so good for the past 70 years."

She popped up in my mind because I have been thinking, *What kind of future can Westminster expect?* I expect a long, Christ-centered future for Westminster. The leadership and members, when we are at our best, listen for God's voice. We have been listening for over 135 years. When listening well, we hear where God is leading us.

You are encouraged to listen for God and pray for the world, pray for the Session and staff, and pray for each other. Then act on what you hear and respond to your prayers in the ways God is leading.

Listening, 

Per Capita: What Per Capita Is and Why It Matters

Each year, our church contributes what's called per capita to the wider Presbyterian Church (USA) (<https://pcusa.org/resources/financial-information/capita>). While the name sounds a little technical, the idea is actually pretty simple: it's our way of sharing the cost of being part of a bigger church community.

Per capita is a set amount per member that helps support the work of our denomination at every level, from our local Presbytery, to our Synod, all the way to the General Assembly. This includes things like leadership training for pastors and elders, support for new and struggling churches, mission partnerships, justice work, and the behind-the-scenes systems that help our church function with integrity and accountability.

For 2026, the per capita rate is \$52 per member, which is divided among:

- The General Assembly (national church)
- The Synod of the Pacific (regional)
- The Presbytery of the Cascades (our local governing body)

In other words, when we pay per capita, we are directly investing in the health, mission, and future of the church beyond just our walls. This is not just a fee, it's a way we show up for one another as a connected church. When we give toward per capita, we're saying that being part of a larger community matters, and that we believe in supporting the ministries, leaders, and partners who help us live out our faith together. Thank you for being part of that bigger story.

Mattering

It's a gift to matter to other people. It's a gift to let others know they matter. This is a column about friends at Westminster Presbyterian Church who do things that matter to the rest of us.

Sundays in Bloom

By Caroline Kurtz

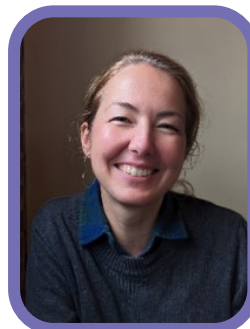
Sue Carrico, Westminster's flower-donation coordinator, has a big calendar and a spreadsheet. She has a gift for organizing. She makes sure things are done right. And she's been sharing these gifts for about three years as the person who arranges to have a bouquet delivered to the church every Sunday. Sue's face glows when she talks about her volunteer service to us. All it took to get started, she says, laughing, was to mention that she was thinking of volunteering. Suddenly, boom. The calendar and spreadsheet were hers!

Sue loves the flowers themselves, the way their color and grace add a touch of visual to the "beauty of holiness" as we worship. She also loves how she helps people honor their loved ones. Sometimes flower bouquets are given in memory of one who is no longer with us. Sometimes they celebrate a marriage, a birth, an anniversary. Sometimes Sue overhears one person thanking another for the flowers and together they remember the friend or event they celebrate. (The flower dedications are shared in the bulletin.) When that happens, Sue gets to watch the bright glow rise on others' faces, and her own heart warms. She can feel the truth--it is a blessing to give. Thank you, Sue.

If you would like to donate flowers for the sanctuary (and make a dedication that will appear in the bulletin), please reach out to Sue. If you need Sue's contact information, e-mail the church office at info@westprespdx.org.

Welcome to Our New Members

Laura Cook grew up in Portland at St. Andrew's Presbyterian. After returning to her hometown with her husband, she is excited to join the Westminster community with her young family. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, bouldering, and taking family walks to local coffee shops.



Vicki Hunt loves to hike, read, swim, and spend time with her family. She has previously been a waitress (at The Original Pancake House) and a bookkeeper, but she has been retired for 18 years. She's looking forward to getting to know more people at Westminster.

Jan Stover was born and raised in Portland. She lost her husband of 45 years in January 2022, and now Boo-boo, her "very spoiled" kitty, is her main love. She is looking forward to developing caring, loving friendships with those in the Westminster community.



Glenn Taylor is a retired photographer who enjoys playing the guitar. He has two children. He looks forward to enjoying fellowship with the Westminster community.

Meet Your Elders - Mary Ann Wish, Class of 2026

In this column, we'll introduce you to the elders who serve on Westminster's Session. If you're a Westminster member who might be interested in being an elder, contact the Reverend Gregg Neel for more information (gneel@westprespdx.org).

Which committee(s) do you serve on, and what do you do with them?

I serve on the Finance and Administration Committee, mostly working with NCCDC and co-chairing the committee.

How long have you been active at Westminster?

I have sung in the choir since 1991.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I like to read, perform, and play the piano. I have been writing poetry and memoirs. I also knit and enjoy my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Do you have pets?

This is the first time in many years that I do not have a dog. So maybe I want a dog. Maybe...



What's something people probably don't know about you?

My family lived in Puerto Rico for a year and while there, I taught in a junior high school. The students were mostly from Cuba and very dissatisfied with being in Puerto Rico. After that year, my family and I lived in LaPaz, Bolivia. It was an interesting time there with three children and a very busy husband, but I succumbed to the pleasure of having a cook and a maid. Our youngest developed shingles; the ambassador's plane was standing by to take the two-year-old and me to Panama. Fortunately our Harvard-trained Bolivian doctor knew exactly how to treat this. The same child ate a poison plant and, thank God, the AID-established English library had the information about the plant and the poison, belladonna, that it contained. Most people don't know that I flew a small plane around the island of Puerto Rico.

My husband taught at U of O, and he had a sabbatical year in Edinburgh, Scotland. We took a ship across the North Sea (I knew we would hit an iceberg), but it was a safe journey. From there we toured France and Spain in a VW bus. My husband and I slept in a tent and the kids got the bus!

Another thing people might not know is that I grew up in southern Ohio, on the Ohio River! Now I'm back to living by the Willamette River, and I love Oregon. Go back to Ohio? NO!

What's one thing you enjoy about serving on Westminster's Session?

I like working on the Session with others who love Westminster as much as I do.

Labyrinth and Taizé on Hiatus

Westminster's labyrinth walk and the Taizé Healing and Wholeness Service are taking a two-month summer hiatus. There will be no July or August labyrinth walk or Taizé service. Both will resume their normal schedule, on the third Saturday of each month, on September 19.

Session Action in June

In its June 2026 meeting, the Session:

- Heard the final report of the Strategic Planning and Visioning Team. They thanked the team for their work and voted to dismiss them.
- Formed a working team to write a new vision statement.
- Renewed the Parish Associate Covenant with the Reverend Eileen Parfrey for one year (June 1, 2026, to May 31, 2027).
- Received updates from the Personnel Committee about staff transition planning and from the Property Committee regarding updating the chapel.
- Prayed for the Westminster community, including joys and concerns.

Fellowship Time Volunteers Needed

We are looking for families, friends, or small groups who can host and provide refreshments during fellowship time on Sundays after worship in August and September. Look for the calendar, instructions, and sign-up sheet in the Great Hall by our water dispenser, C3H20!

July Birthdays



We rejoice with those members, friends of our congregation, and staff who celebrate birthdays in July:

7/1	Katy Reif, Bev Notdurft, Chaunda Wild	7/16	Ruth Miller, Margy De Andrade
7/2	Angie Olmsted, Wendy Cleveland	7/18	Jake Jacobs, Sue Miller, Melanie Lee
7/3	Kristine L. Sparks, Greg Houser, Deana Reed	7/19	Hillary Phillips
7/4	Peggi Jenkins	7/20	Kathy Fong-Stephens, Lynelle Tarter
7/5	Tim Banasek, Avery Clark	7/21	Si Barron, Ron Larson, Debra Wallace
7/6	Ken Waineo	7/22	Carolyn Brown
7/7	Abigail Chipley	7/23	Heidi Masunaga, Alexander Demoulin, Libby Ramirez
7/8	Ella Higgins, Isabella Friedman, Norma Doyle	7/24	Ann Hassold
7/9	Sid Birt	7/25	Linda Murrish
7/10	Beth Neel, Otilia Schrueder, Christina Cole, Dovic Patin	7/26	John Dudrey
7/11	Nancy Edwards, Jean Mittelstaedt	7/27	David Wade, Matthew Mattson
7/12	Brian Dudrey, Roger Rice	7/28	Lane Baldwin
7/14	Beyth Greenetz	7/30	Janell Niemann-Ross
7/15	Linda Dobson, Rod Grafe, Christina Mata	7/31	Gayle Kauffamn

Habitat Volunteer Build Date Updates

By Jack Robinson

May was a great month, as two Westminster teams completed two volunteer build dates for Habitat for Humanity (Portland Area).

Pope Leo Village Site

The first build date occurred on May 16th at Habitat's 25th Terrace site, where we completed work on one home's basement framing and started laying the first floor's subfloor. Ten Westminster volunteers worked from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Here is a team photo:

Team members: Matt Lillard, Bill Ranson, Caroleigh Robinson, Martha Wilson, Greg Moore, David Groff, Jack Robinson, David Hutchinson

Not pictured: Linda Buckley, Margo Salisbury



Gooseberry Trails Site

The second build date occurred on May 20th at Gooseberry Trails in SE Portland. This will be Habitat's largest site when completed. Our project included designing and building a volunteer cleanup area and a platform to put trash in a six-foot-tall dumpster container. Here is a team photo and a photo of the platform:

Team members: Jack Robinson, Karl Kaiser, Fred Bridges, Dan Vetter, Burt Reif



Habitat wants to thank all the volunteers and Westminster for their commitment to providing affordable housing to Portland families.

Additional Volunteers Needed!

We have scheduled additional builds to support Habitat for Humanity families during the summer as noted below.

- 25th Terrace (Pope Leo Village Site): We need 10-people teams on July 23 and September 12.
- Gooseberry Trails: We need 5-people teams on July 15, August 19, and September 16.

Our most urgent need is for volunteers for the 25th Terrace teams. If you would like to participate, please contact Jack Robinson. If you need Jack's contact information, please ask the church office (503-287-1289 or info@westprespdx.org). Thank you in advance for your support.

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Chimes articles are due by 5 p.m. on the dates listed below.

- ♦ July 15 for August 1-31
- ♦ August 12 for September 1-30

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